(a) whether it is a fact that any new consensus has been reached between India and China on Tibet issue;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Tibet refugees in India have opposed this new consensus?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) There is no change in India's position on Tibet.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Indian troops for Iraq despite UN disapproval

†488. SHRI D.P. YADAV: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian troops are being sent to Iraq despite disapproval expressed by United Nations; if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether there is any pressure from USA and the United Kingdom for the same; and

(c) the country which would bear the expenses in case India sends its troops to United Nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

Resolution of outstanding issues with Pakistan

489. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to Government's notice that Pakistan wants resolution of all issues with India but would not sideline the core issue of Kashmir; and

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) In recent past, Pakistani leaders have often referred to Kashmir as the "core" issue between the two countries. This is not in accordance with any agreement between the two countries nor even some of the earlier positions of Pakistani leaders, including Heads of State and Government, who had on several occasions supported the approach of tackling easier issues first, the more intractable ones later, and moving step by step through the process of confidence building.

(b) Prime Minister had, on April 18, 2003 extended the hand of friendship once again to Pakistan. Subsequently, India has taken the initiative to move in a step-by-step manner to normalise diplomatic and other links between the two countries. Government also believe that creation of a conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue necessarily requires an end to cross border terrorism and dismantling of its infrastructure. Progress in economic cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people contacts would help create an environment in which difficult issues could be addressed.

Release of Pakistani prisoners

†490. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Pakistani prisoners Government propose to release in exchange of 20 Indian prisoners released by Pakistan;

(b) the number of Indian prisoners released by Pakistan last time and the number of Pakistan prisoners refeased by India;

(c) the number of Indian prisoners in Pakistan at present and out of them, the number of Prisoners of War of 1971; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government for releasing of the said prisoners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Government announced on May

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.